

MY EVENING

I am the sort of man whose amusement is to do everything better than any other body. Hence my evening with Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes is the private detective whose adventures Mr. Conan Doyle is now editing in the Strand magazine. To my annoyance (for I hate to hear anyone praised except myself) Holmes's cleverness in, for instance, knowing by glancing at you what you had for dinner last Thursday, has delighted press and public, and so I felt it was time to take him down a peg. I therefore introduced myself to Mr. Conan Doyle and persuaded him to ask me to his house to meet Sherlock Holmes. For poor Mr. Holmes it proved to be an eventful evening. I had determined to overthrow him with his own weapons, and accordingly when he began, with well-affected carefulness, "I perceive, Mr. Anon, from the condition of your cigar-cutter, that you are not fond of music," I replied blandly, "Yes, that is obvious."

Mr. Holmes, who had been in his favourite attitude in an easy chair (curled up in it), started violently and looked with indignation at our host, who was also much put out. "How on earth can you tell from looking at his cigar-cutter that Mr. Anon is not fond of music?" asked Mr. Conan Doyle, with well-simulated astonishment.

"It is very simple," said Mr. Holmes, still eyeing me sharply.

"The easiest thing in the world," I agreed.

"Then I need not explain?" said Mr. Holmes haughtily.

"Quite unnecessary," said I.

I filled my pipe afresh to give the detective and his biographer; an opportunity of exchanging glances unobserved, and then pointing to Mr. Holmes's silk hat (which stood on the table) I said blandly, "So you have been in the country recently, Mr. Holmes?"

He bit his cigar, so that the lighted end was jerked against his brow. "You saw me there?" he replied almost fiercely.

"No," I said, but a glance at your hat told me you had been out of town."

"Ha!" said he triumphantly, "then yours was but a guess, for as a matter of fact I-"

"Did not have that hat in the country with you," I interposed.

"Quite true," he said smiling.

"But how -" began Mr. Conan Doyle.

"Pooh," said I coolly, "this may seem remarkable to you two who are not accustomed to drawing deductions from circumstances trivial in themselves (Holmes winced), but it is nothing to one who keeps his eyes open. Now as soon as I saw that Mr. Holmes's hat was dented in the front, as if it had received a sharp blow, I knew he had been in the country lately."

"For a long or short time?" Holmes snarled.

(His cool manner had quite deserted him.) "For at least a week," I said.

"True," he said dejectedly.

"Your hat also tells me," I continued, "That you came to this house in a four-wheeler - no, in a hansom."

"-" said Sherlock Holmes. "Would you mind explaining?" asked our host.

"Not at all," I said. "When I saw the dent in Mr. Holmes's hat, I knew at once that it had come unexpectedly against some hard object? Probably the roof of a conveyance, which he struck against while stepping in. These accidents often happen at such a time to hats. Then though this conveyance might have been a four-wheeler, it was more probable that Mr. Holmes would travel in a hansom."

"How did you know I had been in the country?"

"I am coming to that. Your practice is, of course, to wear a silk hat always in London, but those who are in the habit of doing so acquire, without knowing it, a habit of guarding their hats. I, therefore, saw that you had recently been wearing a pot-hat and had forgotten to allow for the extra height of the silk hat. But you are not the sort of man who would wear a little hat in London. Obviously, then, you had been in the country, where pot-hats are the rule rather than the exception."

Mr. Holmes, who was evidently losing ground every moment with our host, tried to change the subject. "I was lunching in an Italian restaurant to-day," he said, addressing Mr. Conan Doyle, "and the waiter's manner of adding up my bill convinced me that his father had once-"

"Speaking of that, I interposed, do you remember that as you were leaving the restaurant you and another person nearly had a quarrel at the door?"

"Was it you?" he asked.

"If you think that possible," I said blandly, "you have a poor memory for faces."

He growled to himself. "It is this way, Mr. Doyle," I said. "The door of this restaurant is in two halves, the one of which is marked 'Push' and the other 'Pull.' Now Mr. Holmes and the stranger were on different sides of the door, and both pulled. As a consequence the door would not open, until one of them gave way, then they glared at each other and parted."

"You must have been a spectator," said our host.

"No," I replied, "but I knew this as soon as I heard that Mr. Holmes had been lunching in one of those small restaurants. They all have double doors which are mark *Push* and *pull* respectively. Now nineteen times in twenty, mankind pushes when it ought to pull, and pulls when it should push. Again, when you are leaving a restaurant there is usually someone entering it. Hence the scene at the door. And, in conclusion, the very fact of having made such a silly mistake rouses ill-temper, which we vent on the other man, to imply that the fault was all his."

"Hum!" said Holmes savagely. "Mr. Doyle, the leaf on this cigar is unwinding."

"Try anoth-" our host was beginning, when I interposed with-

"I observe from your remark, Mr. Holmes, that you came straight here from the hairdressers."

This time he gaped. "You let him wax your moustache," I continued

(For of late Mr. Holmes has been growing a moustache). "He did and before I knew what he was about," Mr. Holmes replied.

"Exactly," I said, "and in your hansom you tried to undo his handiwork with your fingers."

"To which," our host said with sudden enlightenment, "some of the wax stuck, and is now tearing the leaf of the cigar!"

"Precisely," I said, "I knew he had come from a hairdresser's the moment I shook hands with him."

"Good-night," said Mr. Holmes, seizing his hat, (he is not as tall as I thought him at first) "I have an appointment at ten with a banker, who-"

"So I have been observing," I said. "I knew it from the way you-" but he was gone.

THE 2 COLLABORATORS

In bringing to a close the adventures of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I am perforce reminded that he never, save on the occasion which, as you will now hear, brought his singular career to an end, consented to act in any mystery which was concerned with persons who made a livelihood by their pen. "I am not particular about the people I mix among for business purposes," he would say, "but at literary characters I draw the line."

We were in our rooms in Baker Street one evening. I was (I remember) by the centre table writing out the adventure of *the Man without a Cork Leg* (which had so puzzled the Royal Society and all the other scientific bodies of Europe), and Holmes was amusing himself with a little revolver practice. It was his custom of a summer evening to fire round my head, just shaving my face, until he had made a photograph of me on the opposite wall, and it is a slight proof of his skill that many of these portraits in pistol shots are considered admirable likenesses. I happened to look out of the window, and perceiving two gentlemen advancing rapidly along Baker Street asked him who they were. He immediately lit his pipe, and, twisting himself on a chair into the figure 8, replied, "They are two collaborators in comic opera, and their play has not been a triumph."

I sprang from my chair to the ceiling in amazement, and he then explained: "My dear Watson, they are obviously men who follow some low calling. That much even you should be able to read in their faces. Those little pieces of blue paper which they fling angrily from them are Durrant's Press Notices. Of these they have obviously hundreds about their person (see how their pockets bulge). They would not dance on them if they were pleasant reading."

I again sprang to the ceiling (which is much dented), and shouted: "Amazing! But they may be mere authors."

"No," said Holmes, "For mere authors only get one press notice a week. Only criminals, dramatists and actors get them by the hundred."

"Then they may be actors."

"No, actors would come in a carriage."

"Can you tell me anything else about them?"

"A great deal. From the mud on the boots of the tall one I perceive that he comes from South Norwood. The other is as obviously a Scotch author."

"How can you tell that?"

"He is carrying in his pocket a book called (I clearly see) 'Auld Licht Something.' Would anyone but the author be likely to carry about a book with such a title?"

I had to confess that this was improbable. It was now evident that the two men (if such they can be called) were seeking our lodgings. I have said (often) that my friend Holmes seldom gave way to emotion of any kind, but he now turned livid with passion. Presently this gave place to a strange look of triumph. "Watson," he said, "that big fellow has for years taken the credit for my most remarkable doings, but at last I have him - at last!"

Up I went to the ceiling, and when I returned the strangers were in the room. "I perceive, gentlemen," said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, "that you are at present afflicted by an extraordinary novelty."

The handsomer of our visitors asked in amazement how he knew this, but the big one only scowled. "You forget that you wear a ring on your fourth finger," replied Mr. Holmes calmly.

I was about to jump to the ceiling when the big brute interposed. "That Tommy-rot is all very well for the public, Holmes," said he, "but you can drop it before me. And, Watson, if you go up to the ceiling again I shall make you stay there."

Here I observed a curious phenomenon. My friend Sherlock Holmes shrank. He became small before my eyes. I looked longingly at the ceiling but dared not. "Let us cut the first four pages," said the big man, "and proceed to business. I want to know why -"

"Allow me," said Mr. Holmes, with some of his old courage. "You want to know why the public does not go to your opera."

"Exactly," said the other ironically, "as you perceive by my shirt stud." He added more gravely, "And as you can only find out in one way I must insist on your witnessing an entire performance of the piece."

It was an anxious moment for me. I shuddered, for I knew that if Holmes went I should have to go with him. But my friend had a heart of gold. "Never," he cried fiercely, "I will do anything for you save that."

"Your continued existence depends on it," said the big man menacingly.

"I would rather melt into air," replied Holmes, proudly taking another chair, "But I can tell you why the public don't go to your piece without sitting the thing out myself." "Why?"

"Because," replied Holmes calmly, "they prefer to stay away."

A dead silence followed that extraordinary remark. For a moment the two intruders gazed with awe upon the man who had unravelled their mystery so wonderfully. Then drawing their knives -- Holmes grew less and less, until nothing was left save a ring of smoke which slowly circled to the ceiling. The last words of great men are often noteworthy. These were the last words of Sherlock Holmes: "Fool, fool! I have kept you in luxury for years. By my help you have ridden extensively in cabs, where no author was ever seen before. Henceforth you will ride in buses!" The brute sunk into a chair aghast. The other author did not turn a hair.

**THE LATE
Sensational Arrest.
Watson Accused of the Crime
(By Our Own Extra-Special Reporters)**

12.30 P.M. — Early this morning Mr. W. W. Watson, M.D. (Edinburgh), was arrested at his residence, 12A, Tennyson Road, St. John's-wood, on a charge of being implicated in the death of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, late of Baker-street. The arrest was quietly effected. The prisoner, we understand, was found by the police at breakfast with his wife. Being informed of the cause of their visit he expressed no surprise, and only asked to see the warrant. This having been shown him, he quietly put himself at the disposal of the police. The latter, it appears, had instructions to tell him that before accompanying them to Bow-street he was at liberty to make arrangements for the carrying on during his absence of his medical practice. Prisoner smiled at this, and said that no such arrangements were necessary, as his patient had left the country. Being warned that whatever he said would be used evidence against him, he declined to make any further statement. He was then expeditiously removed to Bow-street. Prisoner's wife witnessed his removal with much fortitude.

The Sherlock Holmes Mystery

The disappearance of Mr. Holmes was event of such recent occurrence and gave rise to so much talk that very brief résumé of the affair is all that is needed here. Mr. Holmes was a man of middle age and resided in Baker-street, where he carried the business of a private detective. He was extremely successful in his vocation, and some of his more notable triumphs must still be fresh in the minds of the public particularly that known as "The Adventure of the Three Crowned Heads," and the still more curious "Adventure of the Man without a Wooden Leg," which had puzzled all the scientific bodies of Europe. Dr. Watson, as will be proved out of his own mouth, was a great friend of Mr. Holmes (itself suspicious circumstance) and was in the habit of accompanying him in his professional peregrinations. It will be alleged by the prosecution, understand, that did so to serve certain ends of his own, which were of a monetary character. About a fortnight ago news reached London the sudden death of the unfortunate Holmes, in circumstances that strongly pointed to foul play. Mr. Holmes and a friend had gone for a short trip Switzerland, and it was telegraphed that Holmes had been lost in the terrible Falls Reichenbach. He had fallen over or been precipitated. The Falls are nearly a thousand feet high ; but Mr. Holmes the course of his career had survived many dangers, and the public had such faith in his turning-up as alert as ever next month, that no one believed him dead. The general confidence was strengthened when it became known that his companion in this expedition was his friend Watson.

Watson's Statement

Unfortunately for himself (though possibly under the compulsion of the police of Switzerland), Watson felt called upon to make a statement. It amounted in brief to this: that the real cause of the Swiss tour was a criminal of the name of Moriarty, from whom Holmes was flying. The deceased gentleman, according to Watson, had ruined the criminal business of Moriarty, who had sworn revenge. This shattered the nerves of Holmes, who (led to the Continent, taking Watson with him. All went well until the two travellers reached the Falls of Reichenbach. Hither they were followed by a Swiss boy with a letter to Watson. It purported to come from the innkeeper of Meiringen, a neighbouring village, and implored the Doctor to hasten to the inn and give his professional attendance to lady who had fallen ill there. Leaving Holmes at the Falls, Watson hurried to the inn, only to discover that the landlord had sent him such letter. Remembering Moriarty, Watson ran back to the Falls but arrived too late. All he found there was signs of a desperate struggle and a slip of writing from Holmes explaining that lie and Moriarty had murdered each other and then flung themselves over the Falls.

Popular Talk

The arrest of Watson this morning will surprise no one. It was the general opinion that some such step must follow in the interests of public justice. Special indignation was expressed Watson's statement that Holmes was running away from Moriarty. It is notorious that Holmes was a man of immense courage, who revelled in facing danger. To represent him as anything else is acknowledged on all hands to be equivalent to saying that the People's Detective (as he was called) had imposed upon the Public.

We understand that printed matter by Watson himself will be produced at the trial in proof of the public contention. It may also be observed that Watson's stop; carries doubt on the face of it. The deadly struggle took place on a narrow path along which it is absolutely certain that the deceased must have seen Moriarty coming. Yet the two men only wrestled on the cliff. What the Crown will ask is,

Where Were Holmes's Pistols?

Watson, again, is the authority for stating that the deceased never crossed his threshold without several loaded pistols in his pockets. If this were so in London, is it not quite incredible that Holmes should have been unarmed in the comparatively wild Swiss mountains, where, moreover, he is represented as living in deadly fear of Moriarty's arrival? And from Watson sketch of the ground, nothing can be clearer than that Holmes had ample time to shoot Moriarty after the latter hove in sight. But even allowing that Holmes was unarmed, why did not Moriarty shoot him? Had he no pistols either? This is the acme of absurdity.

What Watson Saw

Watson says that as he was leaving the neighbourhood of the Falls he saw in the distance the figure of a tall man. He suggests that this was Moriarty, who (he holds) also sent the bogus letter. In support of this theory it must be allowed that Peter Steiler, the innkeeper, admits that some such stranger did stop at the inn for a few minutes and write a letter. This clue is being actively followed up, and doubtless with the identification of this mysterious person, which is understood to be a matter of a few hours' time, we shall be nearer the unravelling of the knot. It may be added, from information supplied us from a safe source, that the police do not expect to find that this stranger was Moriarty, but rather an Accomplice op Watson's, who has for long collaborated with him in his writings, and has been a good deal mentioned in connection with the deceased. In short, the most sensational arrest of the century is on the tapis. The murdered man's rooms in Baker-street are in possession of the police. Our representative called there in the course of the morning and spent some time examining the room with which the public has become so familiar through Watson's descriptions. The room is precisely as when deceased inhabited it. Here, for instance, is his favourite chair in which he used to twist himself into knots when thinking out a difficult problem. A tin canister of tobacco stands the mantelpiece (shag), and above it hangs the long-lost Gainsborough "Duchess," which Holmes discovered some time ago, without, it seems, being able to find the legal owner. It will be remembered that Watson, when Holmes said surprising things, was in the habit of "leaping to the ceiling" in astonishment. Our representative examined the ceiling and found it much dented.

The public cannot, too, have forgotten that Holmes used to amuse himself in this room with pistol practise. He was such a scientific shot that one evening while Watson was writing he fired all-round the latter's head, shaving him by an infinitesimal part of an inch. The result is a portrait on the wall, in pistol-shots, of Watson, which is considered an excellent likeness. It is understood that, following the example set in the Ardlamont case, this picture will be produced in court. It is also in contemplation to bring over the falls of Reichenbach for the same purpose.

The Motive

The evidence in the case being circumstantial, it is obvious that motive must have a prominent part in the case for the Crown. Wild rumours are abroad on this subject, and at this stage of the case they must be received with caution. According to one, Watson and Holmes had had a difference about money matters, the latter holding that the former was making a gold-mine out of him and sharing nothing. Others allege that the difference between the two men was owing to Watson's change of manner; Holmes, it is stated, having complained bitterly that Watson did not jump to the ceiling in amazement as frequently as in the early days of their intimacy. The blame in this case, however, seems to attach less to Watson than to the lodgers on the second floor, who complained to the landlady. We understand that the legal fraternity look to the dark horse in the case for the motive which led to the murder of Mr. Holmes. This dark horse, of course, is the mysterious figure already referred to as having been seen in the vicinity the Falls of Reichenbach on the fatal day. He, they say, had strong reasons for doing away with Mr. Holmes. For a long lime they were on excellent terms. Holmes would admit frankly in the early part of his career that he owed everything to this gentleman; who, again,

allowed that Holmes was a large source of income to him. Latterly, however, they have not been on friendly terms, Holmes having complained frequently that whatever he did the other took the credit for. On the other hand, the suspected accomplice has been heard to say "that Holmes has been getting too uppish for anything," that "could do very well without Holmes now," that "has had quite enough of Holmes," that sick of the braggart's name," and even that "if the public kept shouting for more Holmes he would kill him in self-defence." Witnesses will brought to prove these statements, and it is believed that the mysterious man of the Falls and this gentleman will be found to be one and the same person. Watson himself allows that owes his very existence to this dark horse, which supplies the important evidence that the stranger of the Falls is also a doctor. The theory of the Crown, of course, is that these two medical men were accomplices. It is known that he whom we have called the dark horse is still in the neighbourhood of the Falls.

Dr. Conan Doyle.

Dr. Conan Doyle is at present in Switzerland.

An Extraordinary Rumour

reaches us as we go to press, to the effect that Mr. Sherlock Holmes, at the entreaty of the whole British public, has returned Baker-street, and at present (in the form of the figure 8) solving the problem of The Adventure of the Novelist and His Old Man of the Sea.